

BUT MY BABY DOESN'T LIKE LYING ON THEIR TUMMY

If your baby has not spent much time lying on their tummy it may take some time for them to adjust to the unfamiliar sensation.



When you are lying down, try placing baby across your chest. Make funny faces and noises to motivate baby to lift up its head. Try playing peek-a-boo in this position. You could also try lying baby across your legs instead of the floor.

You could try massaging your baby while they are lying on their tummy.

Try placing a small rolled up hand towel under baby's chest to provide some support. If your baby can only tolerate a couple of minutes on their tummy, don't worry. Try to gradually increase this time by a little bit each day.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED:

Most babies get better at lying on their tummy with practice. The more you persist with placing your baby on their tummy, the more they get used to it and begin to enjoy tummy time.

In some cases your baby may require specialist advice.

- ~ If your baby is over 4 months old (corrected for prematurity) and not managing to lift its head very well.
- ~ Or if your baby always arches very strongly backwards and has difficulty bringing their arms forwards.

You should discuss this with your GP or Plunket nurse and they may refer you to a Children's Physiotherapist at:

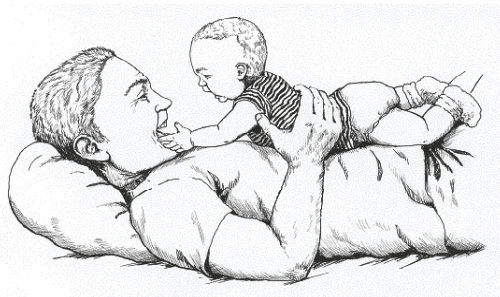
Child Development Services
Nelson Hospital, Private Bag 18,
NELSON 7040
Phone: 03 546 1211
Email: CDS@nmhs.govt.nz



Tummy Time



Time to play



BACK TO SLEEP - TUMMY TO PLAY

Since the early 1990's parents have been advised to put their babies on their back to sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome = cot death). This has been very successful in reducing the rate of SIDS by around 50%.

Statistics show that many babies these days do not get enough 'tummy time'. Tummy time is where you place your baby on their tummy to play which is essential for their development.

Babies who are not encouraged to lie or play on their tummy may be delayed in reaching important developmental milestones such as crawling and walking.

Research shows babies placed on their backs to sleep and placed on their front for extra time during the day, were able to roll, crawl, sit, pull to stand and eventually walk earlier than those placed mainly on their backs.

Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists, UK



IMPORTANCE OF TUMMY TIME

Placing babies on their tummy to play helps their development in a number of important ways:

- ~ **Helps improve ability to hold head up**
- ~ **Builds strength in upper body and shoulders**
- ~ **Helps develop the normal curves of the spine**
- ~ **Begins to develop co-ordination and balance skills**
- ~ **Helps baby to learn about their body by taking weight through their arms**
- ~ **Encourages baby to begin to explore surroundings**
- ~ **Essential to help baby learn how to roll over or push up into a crawling position**
- ~ **Takes the weight off the back of the head to help avoid developing a flat head**

So remember, place your baby to sleep on their back BUT ensure that every day they have plenty of practice playing on their tummy while awake and supervised.



Try lying your baby on their tummy after each nappy change.

IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE TUMMY TIME

The best time to work on tummy time, is when your baby is relatively contented, awake and in between sleeps and feeds. Too full and baby may spill feeds; too hungry may lead to an irritable baby!

As your baby starts to develop head control, lie baby down on a comfortable surface or activity mat. Try to make tummy time fun for you and your baby.

Try to encourage your baby to lift up their head by placing interesting toys or a mirror in front of them.



In early stages your baby will be most motivated by faces so get down on the floor with baby.

Try a variety of toys close to baby's hands with bright colours, noises and textures.

Once your baby can balance and reach for toys, try placing favourite toys just out of reach to encourage moving to get toys.

As your baby is getting stronger, try placing a few toys in a circle around your baby. This helps to encourage reaching in different directions and moving weight from one side to the other. These are essential building blocks to learning how to roll and crawl.